

PLANT HEALTH CARE REPORT



Honeylocust

Honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) is a long-lived, deciduous hardwood tree commonly planted along city streets. It is native to the eastern half of the United States where it grows in rich, moist soils along streams. Wild trees can grow to over 100 feet while cultivated varieties are usually in the range of 30 to 70 feet. Honeylocust has many pest problems, which has limited its use in recent years.

When Dutch elm disease killed most of the elms lining American streets, honeylocusts were often planted as replacements. Honeylocust grows quickly, is easily transplanted, and withstands a wide range of conditions, including poor soils and drought. It is also tolerant of deicing salt in the soil, a common problem along highways.

A desirable characteristic of honeylocust is the light, textured shade it provides beneath a lacelike pattern of small leaflets. Foliage emerges later in the spring than most trees, which helps when growing turf, flowers, or shrubs beneath honeylocust.

Many cultivars of honeylocust have been developed, primarily thornless varieties. The better cultivars, such as 'Shademaster' and 'Moraine', also produce few seed pods.



Urban site



Front yard

The most common pests of honeylocusts in the landscape are listed below:

- 1. Cankers:** Opportunistic fungi, such as *Thyronectria*, invade honeylocusts stressed by drought and heat. Cankers cause branch dieback and can kill trees.
- 2. Mimosa webworm:** This caterpillar frequently consumes all the foliage and covers honeylocust with webbing. With two generations per year, several inspections/treatments per year are recommended.
- 3. Plantbugs and leafhoppers:** The worst damage from this group occurs in mid-spring as the honeylocust leaves are developing.
- 4. Honeylocust pod gall midge:** This small fly causes leaf deformation. Repeated attacks cause death of small branches.
- 5. Spider mites:** The honeylocust spider mite causes the foliage to turn yellow and drop prematurely.

Monitoring and Treatment Considerations for Honeylocust

Early spring

Apply dormant treatment to suppress mites and plantbugs. Expose and inspect root collar for problems. Add mulch as necessary. Remove dead or cankered branches. Sample soil for nutrient and pH levels. Fertilize, adjust pH, and amend soil according to soil analysis. If plants exhibit decline, sample roots or root crown for Phytophthora root rot.

Mid-spring through summer

Monitor for mimosa webworm, plantbugs, leafhoppers, and mites; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize water stress and prevent root disease. Inspect mulch levels and adjust as needed.

Fall

If sucking insects were problematic this past growing season, consider treating with an appropriately timed systemic product. Monitor for mimosa webworm, plantbugs, leafhoppers, and mites; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize winter injury. Remove mulch from stem to reduce risk of disease and rodent injury. Remove dead or cankered branches.
